



[About ATF](#) [Careers](#) [Enforcement](#) [Industry](#) [Field Divisions](#) [Pressroom](#) [Forms](#) [Publications](#) [Laws, Regulations & Rulings](#)

[ATF Home](#) [Firearms](#) [How To](#) [Become an FFL](#)

## How to Become a Federal Firearms Licensee (FFL)

Once you have decided to make an application for a federal firearms license (commonly referred to as an "FFL") you would send the completed application to the ATF post office box listed on the application form, ATF Form 7 – Application for License (FFL). The application must be accompanied by the proper application fee, which you can pay by check, credit card or money order (we do not accept cash). Once the application fee is processed, the FFLC will enter your application information into its database and commence a full review of your application and supporting materials, including fingerprint cards and photographs. The FFLC will review the fingerprint cards you submitted for clarity and, as required by law, will then conduct an electronic background check on all the "responsible persons" you have identified on your application. ATF defines a responsible person as a sole proprietor, partner, or anyone having the power to direct the management, policies, and practices of the business as it pertains to firearms. In a corporation this includes corporate officers, shareholders, board members, or any other employee with the legal authority described above.

The FFLC will then send the applications for new licenses to the nearest ATF field office having responsibility for the area in which your business is located. The field office supervisor will issue an assignment to an Industry Operations Investigator (IOI) who will conduct an in-person interview with you. The IOI will discuss Federal and State and local requirements with you, and go over your application with you to ensure the information is correct and current. The IOI will then prepare a report of his/her interview, the inspection and make a recommendation to either issue you the license or deny the application. Some reasons for denial may include failure to comply with State or local law (such as zoning ordinances), evidence of previous willful violations of the Gun Control Act, or falsification of the application.

The field office supervisor will also review the report and then submit his/her recommendation to the FFLC. Assuming that all background checks have been completed and your business address and proposed business operations are in compliance with State and local law, the FFLC will complete the application processing and issue you the license. [This will take approximately 60 days from the time your application was first received and if the application you submitted was completely and correctly filled out.

## Frequently Asked Questions on Obtaining a Federal Firearms License

### A Frequently Asked Questions Guide to Licensing Requirements Applicable to Federal Firearms Licenses (18 U.S.C. 923)

This page is designed to give people who are new to commerce in firearms and in particular, new to dealing in, (including pawnbroker activities), manufacturing (ammunition and firearms) and importing in firearms other than destructive devices and dealing in, manufacturing of and importing of destructive devices, a general understanding of ATF regulations and procedures. However, nothing provided here can substitute for consulting the Federal Firearms Regulations Reference Guide, [ATF Publication 5300.4](#), revised September 2005.

#### Q: How long does it take to approve/disapprove an application for a Federal Firearms License?

We would approve or, depending on the circumstances, disapprove an application within a 60-day period which begins with the day your application is received at the Federal Firearms Licensing Center in Martinsburg, West Virginia (FFLC).

## Necessary Materials

- ▶ [ATF F 5310.12](#) (Form 7) — Application for Federal Firearm License (FFL)
- ▶ [ATF F 5330.20](#) — Certification of Compliance
- ▶ Two Completed FD-258 (Fingerprint Identification Card) for each Responsible Person (RP) obtained through a local law enforcement agency.
- ▶ Two 2? x 2? Photographs for each Responsible Person (RP)
- ▶ Application Fee

## Questions

If you have any questions relating to the application, please contact the ATF Federal Firearms Licensing Center.

Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives  
Federal Firearms Licensing Center  
244 Needy Road  
Martinsburg, West Virginia 25405 USA  
Voice (866) 662-2750 (Toll Free)  
Fax (866) 257-2749 (Toll Free)  
[NLC@atf.gov](mailto:NLC@atf.gov)

## Sample FFL License



[18 USC 923(d)(2), 27 CFR 478.47(c)]

Q: What is the process ATF uses to review a renewal or an amended application for a Federal Firearms License (FFL)?

Because amended license and renewal license applications are not always forwarded to the field for inspection, depending on the unique facts of each application, thereview processes can vary slightly from that of a new FFL application. However, successful completion of all necessary background checks for the responsible persons and your continued compliance with State and local law remain conditions for receiving a renewed license, among other requirements.

Q: When do I get my license?

The Gun Control Act requires ATF to act on a properly completed application within 60 days. ATF usually considers an application to have been properly completed when all required information has been provided to ATF in writing. This includes submission of the correct number of legible fingerprint cards, the correct fee, a correctly completed application, etc. If material changes have to be made to an application(e.g., a change from one license type to another or the addition of or changes to the responsible persons, different business name, premises address, hours of operation, EIN, etc.) after its initial receipt by the FFLC, then the 60-day processing period may re-start.

The FFLC generates licenses every business day based on the receipt of field recommendations. Licenses are sent first class mail to your mailing address of record from the FFLC. A start-up packet of new forms and other important business information is sent separately upon issuance of the license.

Q: What circumstances may cause a delay in final action on a Federal Firearms License application?

Some examples of factors that could affect timely processing of your application could include the local ATF field office being unable to contact you for the purpose of the face-to-face interview; your need for additional time to satisfy the requirements of your local zoning boards or other State and local agencies in order to bring your proposed business premises into compliance with State or local law; the FBI being unable to adequately complete the required background checks because of incomplete or aged court records or fingerprint card imprints that could not be "read" and require re-submission, or insufficient fee payment.

If the field office's recommendation is to deny your application, then a different process applies. That process requires the field office to notify you in writing of the reasons for denial and give you the chance to request and attend a hearing to review the evidence upon which the denial is based. The Gun Control Act also affords you the right to appeal any adverse decision to Federal district court. This process is significantly lengthy and could obviously exceed 60 days.

[If you submit a license renewal application with the appropriate fee prior to the expiration date of your current license, you can contact the FFLC and request what is called a Letter of Authorization (LOA). An LOA will act as evidence of your licensed status until we act on your pending renewal application and can be provided by the license holder to suppliers to verify that you are a licensee in good standing awaiting final ATF action on your renewal application.

Suppliers may also use [FFL eZ Check](#) on the ATF website to verify the licensed status of any prospective customer prior to consummating a firearm transaction. FFL eZ Check is an ATF program that allows an FFL or other user to verify that a FFL is valid. (Note: FFL eZ Check does not validate Type 03 (Collectors of Curios and Relics) and Type 06 (Manufacturer of Ammunition) licenses. All attempts to check the validity of Type 03 and Type 06 licenses will result in an error message, even though the licenses may be valid. An FFL should not use this error message as reason to deny dealing with a Type 03 licensee.)

Q: What are the record keeping requirements for FFL's?

Licensees must maintain records of all firearms receipts and dispositions, including the name, age, and place of residence of purchasers. 18 USC 922(b)(5) and 923(g)(1)(A). Licensed importers and manufacturers are required to identify firearms they import or manufacture by means of a serial number, which must be

recorded in licensee records. 18 USC 923(i). Licensees are required to respond immediately to ATF firearms trace requests. 18 USC 923(g)(6). Reports of multiple sales of two or more handguns sold at one time or during any five consecutive business days are also required to be submitted to ATF. 18 USC 923(g)(3). Licensees who discontinue business must deliver their records to ATF. 18 USC 923(g)(4).

These requirements enable ATF to carry out one of the principal purposes of the GCA—to assist State, local, and foreign law enforcement officials in tracing firearms used in crime.

The United States government does not maintain records of licensees' firearms transactions, other than the previously mentioned out-of-business records, reports of multiple handgun sales, and records of firearms traces. The assimilation of the information from these records provides valuable leads in the identification of illegal gun traffickers and their sources of firearms in the United States.

Regulations at 22 CFR 122.5 require that records of all transactions authorized by export, temporary import, and temporary export licenses must be maintained by the applicant for a period of 5 years. The records must be made available to United States Customs officers upon demand. These transactions are also computerized at the Department of State and Customs ports.

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